

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 MCT-01 DHA-02 CIAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3928
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

UNCLAS CAIRO 6369

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PFOR EG LY
SUBJ: GOE'S BENGHAZI STAFF RETURNS; LIBYAN DIPLOMATS NOW FREE TO
DEPART

REF: CAIRO 6349

1. CAIRO PRESS, WHICH HAD PREVIOUSLY NOT ANNOUNCED
BAN ON LIBYAN DIPLOMATS LEAVING EGYPT NOR STATUS OF
EGYPTIAN DIPLOMATS IN BENGHAZI (REFTEL), ON APRIL 16
REPORTS EGYPTIAN DIPLOMATS NOW ARRIVED IN CAIRO AND
LIBYANS CONSEQUENTLY PERMITTED DEPART EGYPT.
AHRAM BANNER: "QADHAFI RETREATS, RELEASES EGYPTIAN
STAFF IN BENGHAZI."

2. AHRAM PROVIDES "STIRRING DETAILS": AFTER DETAINING
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BENGHAZI CONSULATE STAFF FOR SEVEN DAYS IN A HOTEL,
RANSACKING CONSULATE AND OCCUPYING IT, LIBYAN AUTHORITIES
ON APR 15 RELEASED ALL 16 EGYPTIAN EMPLOYEES AND THEIR
11 DEPENDENTS. PAPER ATTRIBUTES QADHAFI'S RETREAT FROM
"AGGRESSIVE METHODS" TO FURIOUS REACTION OF PEOPLE OF
ALEXANDRIA WHO HAD TO BE RESTRAINED BY POLICE FROM
TREATING LIBYAN CONSULATE THERE IN SAME MANNER.

(SEE ALEXANDRIA 261). AHRAM SAYS

LIBYAN DIPLOMATS WERE PROTECTED BY PLACING THEM UNDER GUARD IN AN ALEX HOTEL. AT THIS POINT, AHRAM'S DIPLOMATIC EDITOR "LEARNS," QADHAFI QUICKLY REQUESTED GOE TO AGREE TO: (A) ALLOW LIBYANS TO LEAVE ALEX; (B) ALLOW LIBYAN AMB VISIT CONSULAR STAFF IN ALEX HOTEL. IN RETURN, QADHAFI PROMISED ALL EGYPTIAN DIPLOMATS WOULD BE ALLOWED LEAVE BENGHAZI. MFA AGREED, AND AS SOON AS EGYPTIAN DIPLOMATS ARRIVED IN CAIRO, LIBYANS WERE INFORMED THEY FREE TO LEAVE.

3. AHRAM EMPHASIZES THAT TREATMENT OF BENGHAZI CONSULATE WAS IN VIOLATION OF VIENNA CONVENTION: PROPERTY AND MONEY WAS SEIZED, LIBYANS CONVERTED BUILDING INTO STRONGHOLD OF "YOUTH OF APR 7," AND DIP PLATES REPLACED ON CONSULAR CARS. (COMMENT: EGYPT ADHERES TO VIENNA CONVENTION, BUT OUR RECORDS DO NOT SHOW THAT LIBYA HAS FORMALLY ACCeded TO IT.)

4. GOE WILL ON APR 16 SUBMIT NOTE TO ARAB LEAGUE "EXPLAINING" THAT DETERIORATION IN BILATERAL RELATIONS RESULTED FROM QADHAFI DECISION TO ENGAGE IN "SABOTAGE" IN EGYPTIAN CITIES AND TO HARRASS EGYPTIAN WORKERS IN LIBYA. (AHRAM) EGYPTIAN NOTE REPORTEDLY RESPONSE BOTH TO EARLIER LIBYAN COMPLAINT TO ARAB LEAGUE ABOUT EGYPT AND SECOND LIBYAN COMMUNICATION REQUESTING ARAB LEAGUE HQ BE TRANSFERRED OUT OF CAIRO.

5. COMMENTARY. REPORTING IN MEDIA AGAIN NOTES LIBYAN POPULAR ANGER AGAINST QADHAFI "SWEPT" THE COUNTRY (LIBYA)
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WHEN HE CRITICIZED SOME OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS AND "ATTACKED" KORAN AND ISLAMIC TRADITIONS. (AKHBAR HAD REPORTED QADHAFI ACTUALLY ARRESTED SOME SENUSSI SHAYKHS AT KUFRA). EDITORIALS CONTINUE SUGGEST REVOLUTION IS AT HAND. AHRAM, FOR EXAMPLE, OBSERVES "TOPPLING QADHAFI IS NOW MATTER OF TIME, BUT CREDIT FOR THE ACT SHOULD NOT GO TO EGYPT OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY; IT SHOULD GO TO THE LIBYAN PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE MOST INTEREST IN ENDING THE QADHAFI NIGHTMARE."

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